United Nations A/C.4/52/SR.16

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
23 February 1998
English
Original: Spanish

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 November 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Dumitriu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

97-82748 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe), Mr. Dumitriu (Romania), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*) (A/52/209; A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1)

1. **Mr. Babar** (Pakistan) said that his delegation associated itself with the relevant statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and supported strengthening the role of the United Nations in preserving international peace and security. As a beneficiary of one of the oldest United Nations peacekeeping operations, namely the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), Pakistan was currently one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations, serving in 10 different missions. The fact that many Pakistani soldiers had lost their lives had not lessened Pakistan's resolve to serve the cause of peace and collective security. Pakistan welcomed the reform proposals relating to peacekeeping contained in the Secretary General's report (A/51/950), and particularly the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on preventing crises from becoming conflicts.

2. Once a peacekeeping mission had been established, it should be allowed to fulfil its mandate and should not be subjected to any artificial or arbitrary time limits. The United Nations could not wash its hands of a peacekeeping mission until it had resolved the conflict which had given rise to the relevant mandate. His delegation supported the proposal that the Department of Political Affairs should be strengthened in the fields of early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building, while at the same time respecting the principle of equitable geographical distribution. However, the task of defining peacekeeping objectives, criteria and operational guidelines should remain with the General Assembly.

3. Pakistan opposed the idea that the United Nations should sub-contract the collection of vital information to governments. Such a mechanism would be discriminatory since governments would probably volunteer information in a selective manner. Pakistan continued to support the collection of information through the existing worldwide United Nations network. With regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, Pakistan believed that activities undertaken by such organizations should be strictly in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. While encouraging the diplomatic initiatives taken by regional organizations, his delegation's preference was for international peacekeeping forces; Pakistan opposed any unilateral action by regional organizations.

4. As one of the largest troop contributors, Pakistan welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to consider measures to enhance the Organization's rapid reaction capacity. The concept of United Nations standby arrangements needed to be thoroughly examined. Pakistan believed that the initiative to set up a standby high-readiness brigade would undermine the principle of collective action by Member States. His delegation continued to support the establishment of regional logistic bases which could work alternatively as rapidly deployable mission headquarters and early warning wings. The establishment of a trust fund to finance the rapidly deployable mission headquarters was a step in the right direction.

5. The preponderance of gratis personnel in peacekeeping missions continued to be an issue of serious concern to his delegation, since their presence undermined the impartiality and international character of the United Nations. The General Assembly had adopted resolution 51/243 by consensus, requesting the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, to expeditiously phase out such personnel. Thus far the resolution had still not been implemented, although Pakistan welcomed the assurance by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that detailed modalities for phasing out such personnel were being worked out.

6. The adoption of the resolution on death and disability benefits by the Fifth Committee on 5 November 1997 was a landmark achievement and a step in the right direction. The fact that applications for reimbursement of troop costs were still pending as a result of the non-payment of assessed contributions by some Member States was a matter of concern to his delegation, and there was an urgent need for remedial action to be taken.

7. **Mr. Kandel** (Nepal) associated his delegation with the relevant statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations contained useful proposals, recommendations and conclusions for further enhancing the Organization's peacekeeping capacity. Discussions in the Special Committee in the past few years had produced many significant results such as the expansion of its membership and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which provided for a uniform system of death and disability compensation for all United Nations peacekeeping troops.

8. Nepal endorsed the reform initiatives outlined in the Secretary-General's report on renewing the United Nations (A/51/950), especially his determination to make the Department of Peacekeeping Operations more efficient, cost-effective and better managed. One of the principal ways of strengthening the Organization's capacity for peacekeeping was to improve its rapid deployment capability. Nepal, along with 66 other countries, had pledged resources to the system of standby arrangements and had been one of 11 countries to sign a memorandum of understanding on standby arrangements, under which it was prepared to deploy, at any time and upon the request of the United Nations, up to 2,000 troops and a sizeable contingent of civilian police personnel within a response time of 15 to 30 days. His delegation fully shared the belief of the Special Committee that standby arrangements were the key to the increased effectiveness and rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations. Any initiative designed to enhance the organization's rapid response capacity should be based on that system and be complementary to it.

9. His delegation was concerned that the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit had not come into operation due to lack of funds, and in that context it fully supported the intention of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to seek funding for the unit from the peacekeeping support account. The establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters was essential if the United Nations was to be able to deploy a peacekeeping operation promptly as soon as it had been mandated.

10. Nepal shared the concerns of many delegations with regard to the continued use of funds earmarked for peacekeeping operations to cover the regular budget deficit. The result had been delayed reimbursement of troop and equipment costs to contributing countries, which in turn could discourage many countries from taking part in peacekeeping operations. His delegation believed that all Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. Nepal was one of the countries whose participation in United Nations peacekeeping spanned four decades, during which time it had contributed over 30,000 troops and hundreds of civilian police personnel. Nepal had demonstrated its willingness to honour its commitments in that regard and welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1121 (1997) of 22 July 1997 which had instituted the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal as a tribute to the sacrifice of those who had lost their lives in peacekeeping operations.

11. **Mr. Perez-Otermin** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the member countries of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), in addition to Bolivia and Chile, said that in the past few years it had become clear that peacekeeping operations were not a panacea for solving conflicts. However, when used with caution and under appropriate political conditions, peacekeeping operations continued to be an effective instrument. Certain basic principles, such as the consent of all the parties, impartiality and the use of force in self-defence only, should be observed in such operations.

12. The member countries of MERCOSUR and its associated States had demonstrated their commitment to peacekeeping through human and material support to such operations. They were participating in 12 of the 16 peacekeeping operations currently deployed and had given particular attention to training through the establishment of separate regional training centres in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in Montevideo, Uruguay. In addition, Brazil had sponsored a seminar on peacekeeping and had organized a comprehensive computerized exercise known as "United Forces 1997". That exercise, previously held in Argentina and Uruguay, would be organized by Paraguay in 1998. In addition, there had been joint manoeuvres such as the "Southern Cross" and "Operation Ceibo" exercises. Peacekeeping had also been addressed within the context of the ongoing political dialogue between MERCOSUR and the European Union, for example at the second ministerial meeting held in the Netherlands on 7 April 1997.

13. He welcomed the statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/1996/13) which reinforced arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries, as transparency and communication would lead to improved performance. In that context, he recalled that the Permanent Representative of Chile had written a letter dated 28 March 1990 to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/224) stressing that troop-contributing countries had a right to be heard by the Security Council. The Security Council should formalize such consultations by reflecting them in its rules of procedure.

14. While the preventive role of peacekeeping operations continued to be studied, the effectiveness of such operations had already been seen in the case of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). Nevertheless, preventive deployment should always be preceded by preventive diplomacy, since the latter, together with certain actions in the social and economic spheres, could also prevent the escalation of conflicts.

15. He supported the new post-conflict peace-building operations in which member countries of MERCOSUR and its associated countries were also participating. The Security

Council could still play a significant and useful role in cases where, once a peacekeeping operation had been concluded, its police component was given a stabilizing mandate. His delegation supported the growing role of civilian police observers and welcomed the initiative to establish civilian police selection assistance teams.

16. One of the greatest challenges facing the United Nations was how to improve its ability to react to maintain the peace. His delegation supported refinements in the structure of the standby arrangements since that would contribute towards that goal. The establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit would strengthen those agreements and would facilitate equal participation of officers from both developing and developed countries.

17. All death or disability claims for peacekeeping troops must be paid, unless it was established that there had been negligence or misconduct. In that context, the MERCOSUR countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218, which was a step in the right direction in establishing fair standards for all. However, the continued borrowing from the peacekeeping budget for the regular budget was a cause for concern, as were the delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries, especially the developing countries. Member States must pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions, so as not to undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The special responsibility of Permanent Members of the Security Council must also be borne in mind.

18. **Mr. Tasovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that, while in the past three years United Nations peacekeeping operations had been scaled down and their personnel, expenses and scope reduced, his delegation agreed that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lay with the United Nations and that peacekeeping continued to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in discharging that responsibility.

19. All Member States had an obligation to pay their assessments for the peacekeeping budget on time, in full and without conditions, since failure to do so could jeopardize the effectiveness of such operations. However, the developing countries and the countries with transition economies had a limited capacity to contribute. He stressed the importance of strict observance, in the context of peacekeeping operations, the principles and purposes of the Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, as well as non-interference in their internal affairs.

20. Given the complexity of peacekeeping operations, consultations between the troop-contributing countries and the Security Council were essential, and his delegation welcomed the strengthening of that process. It also supported the further development of the system of standby arrangements as a very important element for increasing the deployment capacity for peacekeeping operations. The Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) would substantially increase the United Nations peacekeeping abilities.

21. His delegation would like to stress the valuable role of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in maintaining the peace in the southern Balkans. The security environment in the region since the Dayton Accords remained exceptionally fragile, but the presence of UNPREDEP remained an essential stabilizing factor. For that reason, his Government had requested the extension of the current mandate of UNPREDEP for a period of 12 months beginning 30 November 1997.

22. **Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) said that over the past year the number and scale of peacekeeping operations had diminished, which would be excellent news if it meant that the level of conflict in the world had also diminished. Regrettably, tensions, outbursts of violence, civil wars and ethnic rivalries continued to occur in many parts of the world, but the United Nations was relying on various mechanisms to mitigate or attempt to resolve such disputes.

23. His Government was especially concerned by the use of the so-called "ad hoc coalitions of willing Member States", an institution which supposedly was supported by Chapter VII of the Charter. It was particularly paradoxical that, in paragraph 107 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General himself after acknowledging the United Nations impotence, should seek to justify that mechanism. The authorization by the Security Council, which supposedly gave such arrangements legitimacy was based on a flexible interpretation of Chapter VII, whose application, as a general rule, should be the exception. Often in the quest for efficiency, there had been a tendency to ignore legal rigour and to take the easy road; that could have dangerous consequences for the legitimacy of the Organization's work in the fundamental area of the maintenance of international peace and security. His Government urged the international community to abandon that path.

24. For reasons of efficiency, the United Nations was placing increasing reliance on regional organizations to undertake peacekeeping operations. While such cooperation had at times been beneficial and even critical to the settlement of disputes, as in the case of Africa, where regional and subregional organizations had competence in the field of settlement of disputes, it would be impossible to apply a similar mechanism in Latin America, since that region's institutions lacked the legal capacity for that purpose. Mexico was of the view that recourse to regional organizations was not a panacea for the difficult problems of peacekeeping. Moreover, it was essential to bear in mind the primacy of the United Nations in that field, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

25. As a member from the outset of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Mexico could appreciate how the contribution of its new members had enriched the Special Committee's deliberations during the year, thereby undoubtedly strengthening the spirit of democracy and openness which should characterize the United Nations. It hoped that the Special Committee would very soon attain universal membership.

26. **Mr. Rider** (New Zealand) said that for many countries the 1997 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had a special significance. New Zealand was just one of the many past and current troop contributors which for the first time were able to participate in the Special Committee as full members. The new expanded Special Committee would enrich the deliberations on ways to improve the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations.

27. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was still labouring with insufficient permanent staff, despite the Secretary-General's repeated proposals for extra resources. While the Department required qualified staff to carry out its mandated activities, the possibility must be kept open of seeking voluntary contributions of specialized personnel from Governments on a temporary and exceptional basis. In order to establish effective operations on the ground, the Secretariat needed to receive clear and achievable instructions from the Security Council, which would be helped in part if the Council and troop contributors received military advice before action on a mission was taken. Given the multi-dimensional requirements of modern peacekeeping operations, the views of not only the Secretariat, Council members and troop contributors but also of the major providers of mutual assistance must be taken into account so as to avoid duplication of effort and expense.

28. With regard to the standby arrangement system, emphasis should be placed on initiatives aimed at enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations to react rapidly in response to crisis situations. For those reasons, New Zealand supported the establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters and remained ready to contribute personnel, if requested. New Zealand also agreed that there was need to broaden and refine the concept of a standby arrangement system.

29. On the question of finances, the level of unpaid peacekeeping assessments continued to rise. The debt was being funded mainly through delaying reimbursements to troop contributors, which would be owed $907 million by the end of 1997. That intolerable situation undermined not only the Organization's ability to implement its mandates but also the support of Member States for peacekeeping operations. New Zealand was of the view that the General Assembly should take steps similar to those provided for in General Assembly resolution 51/12 in order to highlight the consequences of continuing failure on the part of Member States to meet their legally binding obligations to pay assessments in full and on time.

30. New Zealand had been calling for greater rationalization of the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other United Nations agencies responsible for mine clearance and fully supported the Special Committee's call for a more coordinated approach. The fact that the Secretary-General had entrusted the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the overall responsibility for demining efforts provided an opportunity to put in place structures and a mode of operation that met both the needs of demining in the context of peacekeeping operations and the challenge of humanitarian demining.

31. While the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was well placed to carry out a number of core functions in support of demining operations, the real work of removing land mines, increasing awareness of the danger of mines and developing indigenous capacities would be carried out by other United Nations agencies, mainly the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services, drawing on the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance. Since the Secretary-General had given management of that Fund to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, regular contributors to the Fund, like New Zealand, would want to see in place efficient methods for its disbursement. The time had now come for the Mine Action Centre to be funded from the regular budget, with Trust Fund contributions being used for mine clearance and assistance to victims and not to subsidize Secretariat staffing.

32. New Zealand remained a strong believer in the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. The Organization was actively running or finalizing a number of peacekeeping missions and at the same time following the progress of multinational "coalitions of the willing" authorized by the Security Council, which represented a significant level of activity that was unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future.

33. **Mr. Sai** (Algeria) supported the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the issue as stated by the representative of Thailand, and recalled that in 1998 the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations peacekeeping operation would be celebrated.

34. The recent trend at the United Nations had been towards giving regional organizations an important role in peacekeeping operations, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had established a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in which various countries, including Algeria, participated. Under the auspices of OAU, that mechanism had helped to resolve some conflicts in Africa. However, experience had demonstrated that political will alone was not enough to carry out a peacekeeping operation successfully, since it was also crucial to have financial resources.

35. OAU had repeatedly requested greater cooperation from the entire international community with respect to the mechanism for conflict resolution in Africa. All those countries that desired to do so should cooperate, through the provision of either funds, equipment or other types of assistance, in order to strengthen that mechanism for maintaining peace and security in the region.

36. While the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209) dealt with many issues, in many cases it revealed a lack of consensus. What was important was that the report highlighted the general principles for peacekeeping operations and contained useful recommendations on that issue. He welcomed the report's treatment of the issue of compensation for those who lost their lives in peacekeeping operations; such compensation should be uniform. He also welcomed the decision to phase out the use of gratis personnel and to enhance consultations between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and countries in which peacekeeping operations were conducted. For many reasons, those two categories of countries had the right to participate in discussions, and his country belonged to both categories.

37. **Mr. Effendi** (Indonesia) said that peacekeeping operations should be carried out in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the political independence of States, non-intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction, consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

38. The experience of recent years could be used to take stock of achievements and setbacks in order to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for future peacekeeping activities. The successful implementation of such activities depended not only on the collective will of Member States and on clearly defined mandates and command structures, but also on secure financing. Therefore, all Member States should pay their assessments on time, in full and without conditions.

39. Indonesia supported the standby arrangements system designed to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of operations. It was important to ensure that any discussions on enhancing rapid deployment should be carried out in a transparent manner and should be open to all Member States. With respect to the issue of gratis personnel, his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243, which called for the phasing out of such personnel. The composition of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. It was also important that the General Assembly had decided to adopt a uniform system of death and disability compensation.

40. Rules of engagement were of fundamental importance in ensuring that peacekeeping troops discharged their mandates effectively, and were vital to the success of operations. In that regard, it would be beneficial for the Secretariat to hold discussions with troop-contributing countries on the rules of engagement prior to the finalization of such rules. Moreover, his delegation wished to reiterate the central role of the United Nations in providing training for military operations as well as for civilian police. Finally, his delegation supported the holding, on the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, of a commemorative meeting for all those who had lost their lives during the past 50 years while serving under the banner of the United Nations.

41. **Mr. Hong Je Ryong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the expansion of the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had ensured a wider participation of Member States, particularly the developing countries, and more detailed discussions on all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The guidelines for such operations had been reaffirmed, and the

issues of financing, reimbursement of troop-contributing countries, standby arrangements and the rapidly deployable mission headquarters had been thoroughly discussed.

42. The selfish policies of some States, which had taken advantage of the turmoil created by the end of the cold war to expand their political influence over other countries, had aggravated disputes and conflicts throughout the world, threatening global peace and stability. Against that backdrop, Member States were paying increasing attention to the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. However, although such operations were necessary to maintaining international peace and security, it was even more important to eliminate the root causes of conflicts – the policies of confrontation, domination and hegemony – that were still widespread in the world.

43. The main goal of the United Nations should be to prevent disputes. When a peacekeeping operation was inevitably needed, the role of the Security Council should be enhanced and it must be ensured that the position of its members was impartial and just in order to resolve the dispute in the interest of the parties involved. To that end, consultations should be held with all the Member States concerned before deciding to undertake a peacekeeping operation, and well-defined mandates and time-frames should be established.

44. Peacekeeping operations should strictly observe the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence of States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Moreover, they should be impartial and be undertaken with the consent of the parties concerned. Moreover, deliberations on all issues relating to peacekeeping operations such as the improvement of the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations, the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters and the use of the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) should be transparent and open.

45. Certain countries had abused United Nations activities for the maintenance of international peace and security for their own political purposes. For example, during the Korean war, the United States of America had forced the Security Council to adopt a resolution calling for the mobilization of international armed forces and had established a "United Nations Command" at its disposal. No resolution adopted by the Security Council with regard to the Korean war provided a legal basis for setting up a "United Nations Command". In fact, the United Nations had no authority whatsoever over the "United Nations Command", nor did it provide financial support to it, and the so-called "United Nations forces" consisted solely of United States troops wearing United Nations caps. More than a half-century had elapsed since the Korean war and, unfortunately, the United States was still abusing the name and flag of the United Nations in order to legitimize the stationing of its troops in the Republic of Korea.

46. The "United Nations Command" in the Republic of Korea, far from maintaining peace and security, was an obstacle to the establishment of a durable peace arrangement in the Korean peninsula. The General Assembly, at its thirtieth session, had adopted resolution 3390 B (XXX), calling for the dissolution of the "United Nations Command"; however, none of the provisions of that resolution had been implemented. The cold war between East and West was over, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had become a Member of the United Nations, a non-aggression agreement had been concluded between his country and the Republic of Korea and an Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had even been established. Therefore, conditions were ripe for implementing the resolution and dissolving the "United Nations Command" at the earliest possible date.

47. **Mr. Skrypko** (Belarus) said that, despite positive changes at the international level since the end of the cold war, peacekeeping operations remained an indispensable tool of the United Nations for settling conflicts. The capacity of the United Nations to conduct those operations and to ensure that sufficient funding was available to that end must be strengthened.

48. His delegation supported the reform proposals made by the Secretary-General with respect to peacekeeping operations, particularly those relating to consolidating the capacity to take timely preventive measures; enhancing the effectiveness of economic sanctions with a view to modifying the behaviour of those targeted, while limiting the collateral damage; developing the post-conflict peacebuilding capacity of the United Nations; broadening cooperation among the departments of the United Nations Secretariat on issues relating to the establishment of peacekeeping operations; and strengthening the coordinating role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in that area.

49. Of all the reform proposals, his delegation accorded priority to measures of preventive diplomacy and, in that connection, stressed the vital role that regional organizations and arrangements could play in early warning and prompt management of conflicts. In any case, the Security Council

must properly coordinate and strictly control peacekeeping operations.

50. Since, in many cases, the timely establishment of peacekeeping operations could save thousands of lives and prevent the collapse of State institutions and the breakdown of law and order, his delegation supported the further development of the standby arrangements and the establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters. It also followed with interest the establishment of SHIRBRIG. In that context, he stressed the importance of strict observance of the basic principles of peacekeeping, particularly the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in cases of self-defence, as well as respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

51. The missions in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia demonstrated the importance of drawing a strict distinction between traditional peacekeeping operations and enforcement actions. Peacekeeping operations should be viewed as a temporary conflict-management mechanism and the use of force in carrying them out should be limited to the utmost. Acts of aggression against United Nations and associated personnel in peacekeeping deployment zones gave cause for grave concern. His delegation supported the statement delivered by the President of the Security Council on 12 March 1997 (S/PRST/1997/13), urging Member States and other interested parties to respect the status of such personnel and to take all necessary steps to protect their safety and security. In that connection, he noted that, on 23 October 1995, Belarus had signed the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

52. **Mr. Gorita** (Romania) said that, in the past seven years, his country had participated in various peacekeeping missions by providing troops, staff officers, military police, military observers and field hospitals. Romania had also sent an engineering battalion to the operations in Bosnia and had participated in the multilateral coalition that had conducted Operation "Alba" in Albania. In 1997, within the framework of the partnership for peace, Romanian troops had participated in 18 joint peacekeeping exercises, conducted with various European partners, and in 22 international training programmes. Romanian peacekeeping troops had thus expanded their capacity to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations in that domain.

53. Despite the economic difficulties it was experiencing as a result of its transition to a market economy, Romania had paid the full amount of its assessed contribution to the budgets of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. That considerable effort on the part of the Romanian Government and taxpayers stood in contrast to the growing delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries. Although there was nothing new about that situation, it was now even more serious than ever and hardly tenable. With the consolidation of democratic institutions in Romania, there was a greater sense that the authorities must be accountable for the use of public monies. In that context, he expressed the hope that the financial crisis of the United Nations would no longer have an adverse impact on those countries that tried to fulfil their obligations in good faith.

54. Although statistics showed a decline in the number of peacekeeping operations, that did not diminish their importance or the duty of the Organization to maintain international peace and security. On the contrary, peacekeeping operations would be as necessary in the future as they had been thus far.

55. Undoubtedly, there was a need for peacekeeping operations to be rapidly deployable. Establishing a credible presence in the early stages of a conflict could prevent its escalation and the loss of human lives. In that connection, his delegation welcomed measures to enhance the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations. The establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters was a very necessary measure in that regard. His delegation had also followed with interest the establishment of SHIRBRIG; it felt constrained to point out, however, that it should not become another select club with special privileges. Various countries or groups of countries could participate in that mechanism with a view to contributing to the efforts of the United Nations. Romania was in the midst of intense preparations for making a solid contribution to the standby system.

56. The reform process in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should continue. His delegation encouraged the Department to reinforce civilian-military integration. Although the decision on gratis military officers had been prompted by the growing concern of a considerable number of States and had been justified under the Charter, it was now necessary to consider with the same energy how the Department's operational capacity could be kept intact and how civilian-military interaction and cooperation could be strengthened at all stages of an operation. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had recognized the particular value to the Department of experienced personnel from troop-contributing countries. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would give due regard to that opinion.

57. More substantial consultations were needed between the members of the Security Council and troop-contributing

countries. Furthermore, his delegation wished to draw attention to the Special Committee's recommendation on communications between the Secretariat and potential troop-contributing countries on proposed new operations.

58. **Mr. Holter** (Norway) said that his country, which was a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, stood ready to make significant resources available in the future and fully supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to increase the effectiveness of multi-functional peacekeeping operations.

59. The decision to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat must be implemented flexibly so as to avoid creating a situation where the Department was unable to perform its tasks, particularly ensuring the safety of personnel working in the field.

60. United Nations capacity in the area of preventive action and rapid reaction must be strengthened. His country was very pleased that, following a Norwegian initiative taken the previous year, in the summer of 1997 a trust fund for preventive action had been established to facilitate the Secretary-General's activities in the field of conflict prevention. Norway had contributed $4 million to the Fund.

61. His country strongly supported the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and had offered to contribute personnel and resources to such a unit. It had also participated, together with the other Nordic countries and other countries, in organizing a Stand-by High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Its initiative for the establishment of a Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS) would further substantially improve the Nordic countries' capacity to support peacekeeping operations.

62. In the area of preventive action there must be clarity of purpose and coherence between mandate, mission and the resources provided. Command and control structures must be unified, workable and efficient. The members of the Security Council, particularly the permanent members, had a special responsibility to ensure that those criteria were taken into account.

63. Consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries should be developed, and countries contributing substantially with humanitarian personnel should be included in the consultations. His country welcomed the increasing tendency for regional organizations, alliances and multinational coalitions to be given mandates by the United Nations to take on peacekeeping and conflict management responsibilities in their respective regions and areas of competence. However, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security remained with the United Nations.

64. His country welcomed the fact that the issue of African security was once again on the agenda of the United Nations. His Government was ready to contribute to building peacekeeping capacity in Africa. The United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should play a coordinating role with respect to the efforts in question. In Europe, his country had contributed 800 troops to the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina under a Security Council mandate.

65. His country called on all States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations under the Charter and pay their assessments on time, in full and without conditions. If peacekeeping operations were to continue to be a vital instrument for international conflict management, Member States must ensure that the necessary financial resources for such operations were forthcoming. It was not acceptable that troop-contributing countries should have to wait years for reimbursements to be made.

66. **Mr. Togusov** (Kazakhstan) said that his country attached great importance to the sustained efforts being made by the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping, since ensuring international peace and security was one of the fundamental aims of the Organization. Preventing conflicts, whether they were internal or between States, called for unswerving attention to possible sources of tension and the immediate adoption of steps to prevent such tensions from escalating into real conflicts. The guiding principles for peacekeeping operations must continue to be the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council, as well as the rules of international law; it was very important to observe the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of States, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

67. His country remained willing to take part in peacekeeping operations. In 1996 it had become the fifty-first Member State to participate in the standby arrangements of the United Nations. It also supported the initiative taken by a number of Member States to set up a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit, as well as other measures proposed in order to increase and strengthen the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations. In December 1995, on the initiative of its President, his country had signed an agreement with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan for the establishment and organization of a joint battalion

for peacekeeping in Central Asia under United Nations auspices. On 31 October 1997, Kazakhstan had ratified the agreement on the formation of the Central Asia battalion and the Heads of State of the three countries had signed a joint agreement on the statute of the military contingents for the battalion. In September 1997, the CENTRASBAT-97 joint peacekeeping manoeuvres had been held in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Military units of the Central Asia battalion, the United States, the Russian Federation and Turkey had taken part in the manoeuvres.

68. The establishment of the battalion and the conduct of joint manoeuvres constituted Kazakhstan's practical contribution to the strengthening of stability in the Central Asia region and to United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security. By means of those activities, Kazakhstan was gradually increasing its experience in the area in question, while at the same time fully meeting its peacekeeping obligations in Tajikistan through its participation in the collective forces of the Community of Independent States. With a view to continuing to make progress in that respect, his country called on the United Nations and on States with practical experience in carrying out such operations to provide training assistance to the Central Asia battalion.

69. **Mr. Doudech** (Tunisia) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made on that item under consideration by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Peacekeeping operations were one of the main areas of activity of the United Nations and Member States were agreed in their recognition of that fact. The success of many such operations was a source of pride for the United Nations. However, those operations often ran into practical difficulties and could not succeed unless certain conditions were met.

70. One issue that should be raised was that of the principles on which peacekeeping operations should be based. Before it was initiated or established, any such operation should have the support of the international community and the consent of the parties involved. It was also essential to ensure respect for the sovereignty of States, and territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. Once deployed, all United Nations missions should fulfil the mandate entrusted to them impartially, without the use of force except in self-defence. Although a particular mission could find itself in a situation where one of the parties to the conflict continued to carry out hostile acts which endangered the lives of the civilian population and impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance, impartiality and the non-use of force would still be essential requirements for the success of that mission.

71. Rapid deployment was another aspect of the question that was worth raising. Various solutions had been proposed, including the system of standby arrangements, in which Tunisia had decided to participate. His Government supported efforts to promote that system and encouraged relationships of association among countries which were in a position to provide assistance so that logistics support would be guaranteed. Such relationships would make it possible to increase the number of participants in that system based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

72. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter represented a fundamental means of strengthening the capacity of African countries in the area of peacekeeping. His delegation supported any initiative which would tend to increase the participation of the African States in peace-keeping operations. It also supported the participation in such operations of OAU mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. Based on the results of the Security Council meeting held in September to review the situation in Africa, relationships of association between Africa and the international community should gain new impetus. His delegation hoped that appropriate proposals in that regard would be made in the report of the Secretary-General which the Security Council had requested.

73. The financing of peacekeeping operations must be stressed, as it continued to be one of the major obstacles the Organization faced in that area. It had not yet been possible to establish the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit precisely because of a lack of financial resources. Finally, delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries were still a cause of concern for many States. That problem could impede the participation of certain countries, in particular the developing countries, in future United Nations operations. The only solution was for all States to meet their financial commitments to the Organization in full, on time and without conditions.

74. **Ms. Nguyen Thi Nha** (Viet Nam) said that her delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It welcomed the enlargement of the Special Committee and hoped that it would increase the contribution of Member States to its work. Her delegation also welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/218 E, section II of which addressed the issue of death and disability benefits, since it corresponded to the demands for reform and the correction of imbalances and discrimination within the Organization.

75. Her delegation believed that the United Nations had primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that peacekeeping operations continued to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in the discharge of that important task. While peacekeeping operations were important to prevent conflict situations from escalating, the aim of the United Nations should be to achieve the peaceful settlement of disputes. Therefore, all means should be exhausted before coercive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter were considered. The use of force should be the last resort and should therefore never be regarded as a substitute for the political settlement of disputes; rather it should be complementary to political means. In that regard, her delegation recognized the utmost importance of the strict observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a State.

76. Her delegation shared the view of many delegations that the success of peacekeeping operations depended on the observance of the basic guiding principles, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. In addition, peacekeeping operations should be provided with clearly defined mandates, objectives, command structures and secure financing. Since peacekeeping operations were frequently assigned tasks that went beyond their capacity, there was a need to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

77. Her delegation recognized the obligation of Member States to pay their assessments on time, in full, and without conditions, in accordance with the existing special scale of assessments established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973, as well as the special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council. In order to ensure the success of those operations, her delegation stressed the neeed for consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries and fully endorsed the recommendation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that the Security Council should institutionalize such consultations within its rules of procedure. Finally, she noted the increasing imbalance between the expenses of peacekeeping operations and the resources available for development, and stressed that peacekeeping operations should not be financed at the expense of development activities.

78. **Mr. Kasanda** (Zambia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It fully subscribed to United Nations peacekeeping operations and recognized their usefulness. For that reason it had made its modest contribution to operations in Angola, Chad, Iraq, Mozambique, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Rwanda. It was also in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations relating to its contributions to the standby arrangements system. It would continue to make its contribution to peacekeeping operations in the firm belief that durable peace was dependent on addressing the root causes of conflict in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner, taking into account the political, social and economic aspects of the conflict.

79. He emphasized the need to establish peacekeeping operations in keeping with the guiding principles of the Charter, especially the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a State. Of equal importance for such operations were the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. In order to succeed, peacekeeping operations must have a clear mandate, well-defined objectives and command structures and secure financing.

80. To date, a solution had still not been found to the question of secure financing for peacekeeping operations. His delegation was concerned about the continued use of the peacekeeping accounts to cover shortfalls in the United Nations regular budget, resulting in the delay of payments to troop-contributing countries, most of which were developing countries. A solution must be found to that problem and the continuation of that practice prevented, which adversely affected equipment and troop-contributing countries. In that regard, he welcomed the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 114 of his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/590). All Member States should pay their contributions in full, on time, and without conditions.

81. He welcomed the logical and peaceful conclusion of the debates on the issue of death and disability compensation, since it had helped to achieve a solution which represented a victory for the equal treatment of all participants in peacekeeping operations. He was also concerned about the transfer to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the functions relating to demining activities, which had previously been under the purview of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. However, he welcomed the assurances of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that such transfer would not adversely affect demining activities.

82. **Mr. Mohammed** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement recently made on the issue under discussion by the representative of Thailand speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In spite of their limitations, United Nations peacekeeping operations had proved to be valuable instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security in many parts of the world, and would remain an indispensable instrument of the Organization.

83. As a member of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Ethiopia had participated actively in its work, and welcomed the increase in its membership. At its 1997 session, the Special Committee had discussed important issues and had made recommendations on future work in the area of peacekeeping. The Special Committee had reaffirmed the guiding principles of peacekeeping, in particular the need for strict observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Another important recommendation of the Special Committee was the need for systematic consultations between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council. In spite of some progress, that objective was yet to be fully attained.

84. He was pleased to note the important actions taken by the General Assembly on gratis personnel and on compensation for death and disability. With respect to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the Special Committee had recognized the important contribution that regional organizations could make to the maintenance of international peace and security, and had urged that such cooperation should be strengthened in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. In that connection, the Special Committee had underlined the important role of OAU and its mechanism for conflict prevention. While he welcomed the increased consultations between the United Nations and OAU on the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations, much still remained to be done. In that regard, he would appreciate clarification from the Secretariat on the status of the report that the Special Committee had requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its current session on measures taken to strengthen the institutional capacity of OAU, to organize training programmes for military personnel of African countries and to mobilize support to African peacekeeping capacity.

85. He was convinced that African peacekeeping capacity could be considerably enhanced as a result of the participation of African countries in the United Nations standby arrangements. With respect to crises in Africa in particular, the difficulty stemmed not from the absence of standby arrangements, but rather from the lack of political will in addressing African problems with the same attention and seriousness as crises in other parts of the world. He hoped that more attention would be paid totthe efforts of African countries to resolve conflicts on the continent. His delegation fully supported the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit with an appropriate financing mechanism and transparent working methods for its proper functioning.

86. Although peacekeeping missions in the post-cold-war world had been complex and multidimensional, and in most cases peacekeepers had demonstrated the highest moral standard and integrity in carrying out their tasks, in a few cases, such as the case of the violations of the rights of Somali citizens, they had failed to do so. He hoped that such situations would be investigated and that the United Nations would prevent the reoccurrence of similar acts. In that regard, it was appropriate to consider the question of elaborating a code of conduct for peacekeepers.

87. Ethiopia, in addition to its participation in various United Nations peacekeeping operations, was also actively engaged in regional and subregional peace efforts. Ethiopia attached the highest priority to securing peace in Somalia and resolving other crisis situations in Africa. Therefore, his delegation wished to request greater cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

88. **Mr. Zimmermann** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that ICRC had continued to devote considerable attention to the issue of the relationship between humanitarian action and political and military action. As far as the safety of the personnel of humanitarian organizations participating in peacekeeping operations was concerned, the best form of protection against violence consisted in adopting an approach which faithfully reflected the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Observance of those principles would guarantee effective and lasting action which was based on the trust of the population and on the consent of the parties to the conflict, as well as on the political will to ensure respect for the relevant rules of international law. As a rule, ICRC did not use armed escorts for the protection of its staff because such escorts tended to increase the risk of confusion.

89. While United Nations peacekeeping operations were in principle carried out with the agreement of all the parties concerned, they were based on very different mandates set by a body – the Security Council – whose role was essentially political. Therefore, it was normal that not all the protagonists should perceive such operations as "neutral". Moreover, the fact that peacekeeping forces frequently

carried out tasks which had more to do with providing aid to the victims than with keeping the peace created confusion as to the neutrality, independence and impartiality of humanitarian action, which adversely affected the acceptance and even the safety of the staff of humanitarian organizations.

90. It was important to maintain a clear distinction between humanitarian organizations and international military forces. The main task of such forces was to create a safe environment in which protection and assistance activities on behalf of the victims could be carried out. It was therefore important to establish clear mandates and objectives as soon as possible, in consultation with the parties concerned. The roles of the various protagonists should be clearly defined in order to ensure their complementarity; likewise, interfaces should be established to facilitate communication between them. ICRC was pleased to note that similar views had recently been expressed by both the Secretary-General and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

91. Although some headway had been made on the study of the establishment of a general framework allowing humanitarian and peacekeeping activities to be carried out in a complementary fashion, much still remained to be done. To that end, on the occasion of the Twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Belgian Government had offered to host an international symposium in 1998 on the relationship between humanitarian action and political and military action.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.